

FREDERICK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 11, 2010

TITLE: **POINT OF ROCKS COMMUNITY COMMONS PARK PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN**

REQUEST: Present an overview of the Point of Rocks Community Commons Park Preliminary Master Plan for Planning Commission review and comment

PROJECT INFORMATION:

LOCATION: Located between Commerce Street to the South and West, Monroe Street to the East and Clay Street (MD Route 28) to the North

COMP. PLAN: Public/Quasi Public Parkland or Open Space

ZONING: Resource Conservation

REGION: Adamstown

APPLICANT: Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation

STAFF: Bob Hicks, Deputy Director – Parks and Recreation

Enclosures:

- Preliminary Point of Rocks Community Commons Park Master Plan
- Master Plan Narrative Summary



KEY

	Property Line		Proposed Pedestrian Bridge		50 Foot Stream Buffer
	Existing Contours		Proposed Micro-Bioretention		Existing Utilities
	Proposed Information Kiosk		Proposed Grass Channel		Railroad
	Proposed Picnic Pavilion		Proposed Trees & Shrubs		
	Proposed Restrooms		Proposed Park Signs		
	Proposed Drinking Fountain		Proposed Security Lighting		
	Proposed Bench		Proposed Bike Rack		
	Proposed Bench Picnic Table		Existing Wooded Area (Under plant with Native Trees & Shrubs)		
	Proposed Storyboard		Existing Trees		

Notes:

1. This Plan is subject to Frederick County Flood Regulations.
2. The grass channel edges are to be planted with shrubs & grasses to provide a deterrent to accessing the rail lines.

PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN



POINT OF ROCKS COMMUNITY COMMONS

PREPARED FOR: FREDERICK COUNTY DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PREPARED BY: HUMAN AND ROHDE, INC. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

SCALE: 1" = 30'
DATE: APRIL, 2010



POINT OF ROCKS COMMUNITY COMMONS PARK PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

The Preliminary Master Plan for Point of Rocks Community Commons calls for an open kiosk to contain information of the area, a plaza with an obelisk or sculpture, park sign, and parking for 7 vehicles at the east end of the site and a picnic pavilion, an area for portable restrooms, play area, amphitheater and parking for sixteen vehicles and 2 buses at the west end of the park. A trail system loops around each end of the park and a footbridge over the stream connects the two areas. The trail also provides pedestrian access from Monroe Street to Commerce Street with a possible crossing of Clay Street indicated at Monroe and Clay Streets. Storyboards describing the history of Point of Rocks, the railroad, and environmental features will be located along the trail as well as pedestrian level lighting for security purposes if possible.

The parking lot at the east end of the park will access on to Monroe Street. It will provide one handicap and six standard parking spaces. The information kiosk is shown to be a covered open-sided structure that could hold and display information about the area, sights to see, points of interest, and a community bulletin board. A drinking fountain is indicated to be located adjacent to the kiosk as well as a bike rack. A 6 foot wide trail loops around the east end of the park and connects to a plaza area that will feature an obelisk or sculpture depicting the major floods that the park has seen over the years. Benches are planned to be located around the plaza area and along the trail. Picnic tables and benches are also indicated in the open grassy area. A bioretention facility is shown between the kiosk and the plaza. The facility will be planted with native plants and contribute to the garden character of the park as well as serve as a stormwater management facility.

The parking at the west end of the site will access from Commerce Street. It will provide 1 space for handicap parking and fifteen standard spaces as well as parking for 2 school buses. A small picnic pavilion is shown adjacent to the parking area as is an area for portable restrooms, a drinking fountain, and bike rack. A natural play area is indicated to the east of the picnic pavilion. It is hoped that elements indigenous to the area, such as calico rock and red Seneca sandstone can be incorporated into the play space. East of the play area where the topography slopes to the stream an amphitheater is planned. Again it would be appropriate to construct the seating area of indigenous stone, setting the stones into the slope as it steps down to the stream however because the site is entirely in the floodplain stones may not be permitted. The six foot wide trail forms a loop around the west section with a spur leading to the C & O Canal and another connecting to Commerce Street at the northwest corner. Because there are no sidewalks along the north side of Clay Street and at present there is no room to provide a safe landing for pedestrians, a crosswalk at the west end of the site is not shown. Benches, storyboards, and pedestrian level lighting are indicated along the trail.

The plan calls for stormwater to be managed in a grass channel along the south side of the park. The channel will be designed to filter and slow the rate of runoff from the parking areas before entering the stream. Along the edges of the grass channel shrubs, ornamental grasses, and perennials are to be planted to provide an aesthetic feature and a natural barrier to deter children from running into the street and onto the railroad tracks. The park is to be revegetated with native trees and shrubs. Proposed trees are shown throughout the site to create a park like setting as well as along the trail to provide shade. Masses of trees and shrubs are shown between the trail and Clay Street to provide a buffer from the traffic. A mass of shrubs is also indicated as a backdrop to the amphitheater and a hedge row between the west parking lot and Commerce Street to provide a barrier to the road and train tracks. The wooded area along the stream is to be selectively cleared of invasive and non-native species and replanted with native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers.

Because the entire park is within the floodplain there are several restrictions to development. Some of the features that the Master Plan Committee desires in the park may not be permitted within a floodplain, such as fountains, enclosed structures, parking lots, etc. The parking lots and trail will need to be constructed with pervious materials and the picnic pavilion and kiosk will have to be post and beam construction with no enclosed sides. The storyboards, benches, and other site amenities also can be provided as long as they are firmly anchored. The Committee is hopeful that given the proper design of the structures and features all the amenities can be provided.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

Below are several suggestions, comments and conditions made by the Master Plan Committee and Staff that give further direction and are incorporated in the Master Plan.

- The entire park is within a flood plain. Activities within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain are subject to regulations of the State of Maryland, Frederick County Flood Regulations and the FEMA and may require permits from MDE and/or the Corps of Engineers.
- No new development including parking lots and walking paths impervious to water, or fill or excavation operations in conjunction with development will be permitted
- CSX has concerns about safety along the railroad and wants a deterrent to prevent/discourage park users from going onto the train tracks. Per the Plan the grass channel edges are to be planted with shrubs and grasses to provide a vegetative buffer to the train tracks.
- The storyboards within the park should stress the 'natural and historic legacy of Point of Rocks'.
- The County owned property to the west of Ballenger Creek Pike should be selectively cleared of invasive plants and revegetated with native species.
- The Committee would like the County & State Highway Administration to pursue constructing a sidewalk along the north side of Clay Street (MD 28).
- The feature in the Plaza area whether a fountain or sculpture should be based on the theme that the site floods.
- The play area should be a natural playground utilizing materials native to the area and reflecting the historical character of the site.
- The existing wooded area within the 50 foot stream buffer is to be selectively cleared of invasive species and under planted with native trees and shrubs. Birdhouses should be incorporated into the area.
- A storyboard should be located prior to crossing Commerce Street to alert pedestrians of the railroad crossing and safety concerns.
- A "Canal Town" storyboard could be placed on the spur trail that connects to the C & O Canal listing the facilities in Point of Rocks and direction to the kiosk for hikers and bikers traveling the Canal tow path.
- The security lighting in the park should be pedestrian level lighting only (poles from 10 to 14 feet high). The lights should be on a timer so that they can be turned off at 11:00 PM.